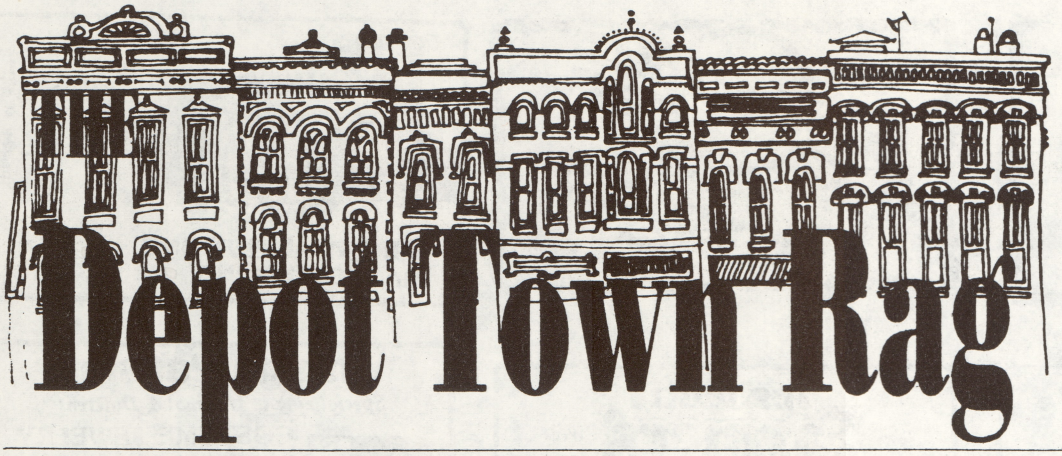


# Depot Town Rag

FREE
100%
RAG
CONTENT

1985

JANUARY MEETINGS
DDA January 9 - 6:00
DTA January 17 - 7:30
Foundation January 24 - 8:00
...in the Caboose

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

## FROG ISLAND THEATRE WILL SEAT HUNDREDS

Called the "Cottonwood Theatre" by many, the most dramatic development in the on-going $300,000.00 Frog Island rehabiliation is the broad amphitheatre at its south entrance. Even with gently sloping ramps from both Cross Street and the huge parking lot to the east, audiences will still have the option of arriving across the charming old foot bridge which crosses the covered sluiceway which once made this place an island in the Huron River and the home to a lumber mill and a flour mill. All that bulldozing has not obliterated the park's touch with it's history.

The broad stage faces five deep and terraced seating areas, with the handsome new Cross Street Bridge serving as a balcony which can seat (stand?) several hundred extra.

From the seating areas one is fascinated by the view across the island (at an interesting angle – not just end to end, though the goal posts) which includes a new gentle slope at the north end, the Huron River bank to the west, and a charming new storage facility along the east side of the field.

This storage building, done in the Gothic Revival Style, has echoes in the roof-tops across the river, in the corrugated tin roofs around the Farm Bureau, and in the horizontal masonry banding found in many public buildings of the Victorian period throughout the City. When compared to the new Amtrak depots and other such disposal architecture around the country, this little period piece is quite a contrast.

All that remains to be done before the first performance is the carpeting, which should have a good start before an early summer dedication performance. The whole community looks forward to the Ypsilanti Band and Chorus, the Ypsilanti Players, the Ypsilanti Area Dancers and the Depot Town Association ALL cooperating in the theatre's premiere. How about it?

## NEW LIGHT ON YPSILANTI'S FAVORITE SUBJECT

Depot Town has a new glow. Detroit Edison's recent installation of mercury vapor lights from North Huron – across the bridge – through the district – and down River Street casts a soft and even light throughout the heart of historic Ypsilanti. It's a glowing effect, but still bright enough to read THE RAG anywhere on the block. Approaching from any point of the compass, visitors can clearly see our recent preservation efforts all night long. Our favorite view is from Mayor Murdock's front porch on River Street.

All this is due to the war of the worlds snake-head lights which illumine intersections, the bridge and park entranceways, and partly because of the shorter lamps (called pedestrian, not because of their design or material,but because of the height).

Such an installation is a result in large part, of constant communications with the City. Hizzoner and Fifth Ward Council members are regular participants in the life of this neighborhood and their appearances at a meeting in the Caboose, a concert in the Freight House, or at your table in any local establishment is no accident. They are not simply visiting, but are active members in the life of this district.

Never satisfied with what the rest of the world might call "progress", Depot Towners now use these extra hours of visual activity to find still more projects to breathe more life into this old business district. Today's modern lighting only points out the few properties in the block which are still contributing the least benefit to their neighbors and themselves. True, their property values have risen, due to the efforts of their neighbors, and the over-all aura of the block is up-beat rather than beat-up, but they only reap the benefits of the labor of others. Look around in this new, orange lighting. Find a run-down property you'd like to see saved. Make them an offer. It's probably for sale.

482-0489
23 E. Cross
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

**Now and Then**
**ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES**
*Buy — Sell — Trade*
IN HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

SIDETRACK
GOOD FOOD GOOD DRINKS GOOD TIMES
Located in historic Depot Town
56 E. CROSS • YPSILANTI
483-1035

bd
B & D RETAIL PLUMBING and HEATING, INC.
Richard C. Laflin
310 N. River - 487-1510
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

**Jim MacDonald's Antiques**
**Apple Annie's Vintage Clothing**
29 East Cross • 481-0555
Tuesday-Saturday 12-6 Sunday 12-4

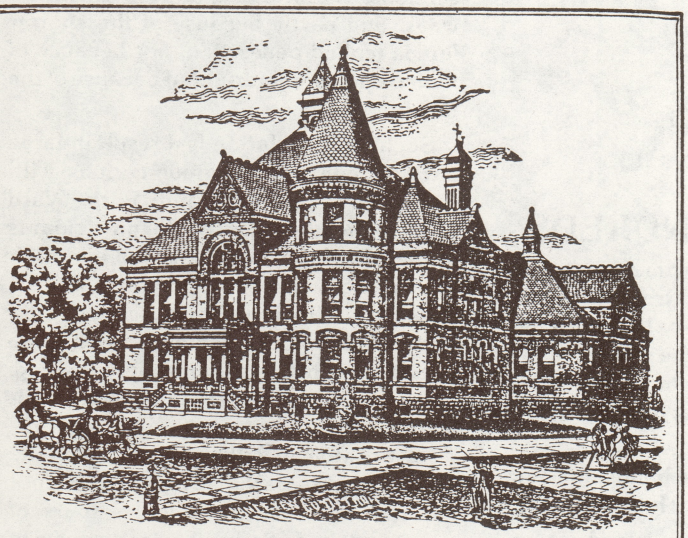
Stop By!
**Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market**
Weds & Sat 7-2
in historic Depot Town
★ Fresh Cider, Farm Eggs, Mich. Apples!
★ Fruits and Vegetables, Nuts!
★ Home Baked Goods · Coffee Shop!
GOOD SELECTION · FAIR PRICES

**Vintage Passion**
*Specializing in Unusual & Different*
COSTUME JEWELRY
Featuring fabulous rhinestones
Vintage Clothing
*"You've got to see it to believe it!"*
32 East Cross
Historic Depot Town

**DEPOT EXCHANGE**
ANTIQUES
54 E. Cross St. (near tracks)
Depot Town
Ypsilanti, Mich. 48197
WE BUY, SELL & TRADE
482-1780
Furniture Stripping
Mention RAG ad & get 10% Discount

*and everything nice*
RECYCLED CHILDREN'S CLOTHING
HANDCRAFTED TOYS & GIFTS
27 EAST CROSS

*Pints*
*Quarts*
*Half Gallons*
*Gallons*
**Miller's** SINCE 1906
ICE CREAM
*Malts*
*Shakes*
*Sodas*
*Cones*
*Sundaes*
42 E. Cross • Ypsilanti, Michigan
485-7546
"Have Ice Cream the old fashioned way."
Sit down to the creamiest ice cream around served in a real glass dish.



**CLEARY BUSINESS COLLEGE,**
Ypsilanti, Michigan.

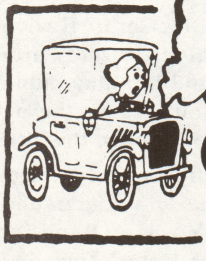
The most conveniently arranged and handsomely furnished institution devoted to business college work, in the country.

Commercial (no text-book work), English, Shorthand and Penmanship departments. **POSITIONS PROCURED** for all Shorthand Students when competent. Write for LARGE JOURNAL.

Address, P. R. CLEARY, President,
YPSILANTI, MICH.

**IKE'S**
DEPOT TOWN BARBER SHOP
40 E. CROSS YPSILANTI
483-6300

RIVER ARTWORKS
**CUSTOM FRAMING**
**DESIGNER MATS**
**482-8785**
• PROFESSIONALS WITH ALL GRAPHICS NEEDLECRAFT FRAMING OF OBJECTS ARCHIVAL FRAMING
• GALLERY OF ORIGINAL ART
• RENTAL DARKROOM
• RENTAL WORKROOM
48 E. CROSS
DEPOT TOWN



**CITY RADIATOR**
110 N. River
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
**483-2248**

## STICK THIS IN YOUR VICTORIAN VOCABULARY BANK!

NO GRIMTHORPING HERE! Grimthorpe: Toward the end of the 11th Century, Lord Grimthorpe undertook the restoration of the west front of St. Alban's Abbey (Hertfordshire, England) and its window. The good lord's name entered the language deplorably: to grimthorpe means to do a rotten job of restoration.

DIESEL: Rudolph Diesel, born in Paris of German parents in 1858, developed a way to utilize compressed air that resulted in a more efficient internal combustion engine. (Unfortunately, Herr Diesel did not develop a storehouse of compressed air for his own body. One night in 1913, crossing the English Channel, he fell from the mail steamer and was drowned.) The diesel engine is now comonly lowercased.

PULLMAN: George M. Pullman (1831 - 1897) improved on earlier versions of a railroad passenger car for the elite – one with comparatively comfortable furnishings, even beds. When railroads were the arteries of America, better-heeled types traveled by pullmans. Hoi Polloi traveled in coaches, dozing the night as best they could on hard, springless seats.

Willard R. Espy

DEPOT TOWN Jazz Winter Series W·E·M·U

JIMMY WILKINS ORCHESTRA with DENNIS ROWLAND

The ANDERSON/REED DONDERO TRIO

KAMAU KENNYATTA QUINTET

The LITTLE SONNY BLUES BAND with Joe L.

MR. B.

The RAYSE BIGGS QUARTET with RUSSELL GREEN

DOMINO

The JOE LODUCA DUO

WINTER JAZZ SERIES !!!!!!

## SPECIAL AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING HOLIDAY DECOR

Congratulations to all who contributed to the festive atmosphere of another Victorian Holiday. We have never looked nicer. The judges wish to also give special mention to the following:

- AND EVERYTHING NICE for their creative window display on the theme "and visions of sugar plums danced in their heads."
- THE NEWEL BLOCK for three floors of sparkling white windows.
- MILLER'S ICE CREAM for the tiny Santa's Sundae window exhibit.
- HON'S FLOWERS for traditional, continual elegance in their entire facade, windows, and interior.
- ARTRAIN BUILDING (the Shankwilers) for the tree of every child's fantasy.
- SIDETRACK for the most complete interior
- MILLER MOTORS for the Christmas dream of many adults.

## OPPORTUNITY OF THE DECADE

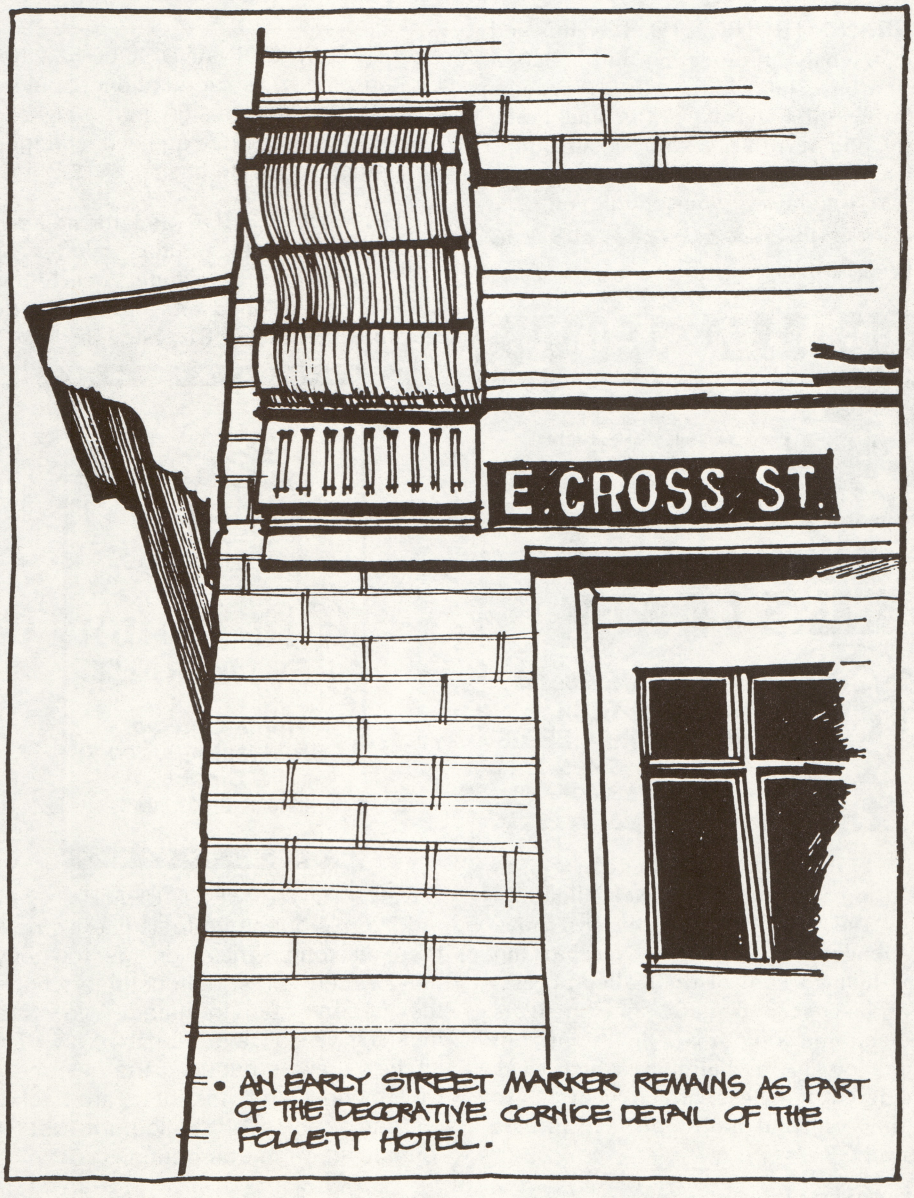
Merchants are urged to rush their fifty-word copy to the caboose mail slot to be included in the map/directory/brochure which will celebrate DTA's Tenth Year. Include your art work, logo, photos and copy. We'll set the type. With a month's lead time, we should publish in April. Here's a sample:

"Tastes like mud? It should!
It was ground this morning!"

THE DAILY GRIND
?? North Cross Street

The best dometic and imported coffees. Pots, cups and saucers for your collection. Tour the tunnels from our basement. We've been in Depot Townn for 300 years.

You can't beat the price. It's already paid for.




AN EARLY STREET MARKER REMAINS AS PART OF THE DECORATIVE CORNICE DETAIL OF THE FOLLETT HOTEL.

## DTA 20 December 1984

President McKeever called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Caboose. The minutes were read and approved. The treasurer reported $6,987.48 in the general fund. RAG =$88.98, JAZZ = $2619.76, SPECIAL EVENTS =$971.22, GENERAL FUND =$3307.52

MEMBERSHIP: Barbara Lohr reported $815.00 in active memberships, will send final notices to about 30 memberships lapsed since 1983. Who has the DTA return address stamp?

STEAM AND GAS SHOW was proposed by Jim Monaghan, who is every bit as creative and dynamic as his brother. He sees a steamboat operating on the Huron River by 1986, running steam clubs in the center of Depot Town for 1985 Heritage Festival, for all three days. Other locations: Depot yard, Market triangle, end of Freight House. Bob McPharland, (South Lyon, Pontiac Trail: pres. Early Engine Club of Greenfield Village, editor of the "Oiler".) Exhibitors don't need prizes, just fuel, wood and plaques for participation and appreciation.

JAZZ committees include Amy Berger, tickets; Lee Ann Flegel, clean-up Paul Fetters, set-up; Tom Dodd, security; Rex Richie, Bar; Carolyn McKeever, publicity. Food contracts will include deli-style dinners beginning at 6:30, bar will be in coffee shop, food at coolers, lighting is semi-permanent and installed by Bob Gregory. Stage legs are being cut to new lengths. Tickets for January 19 concert and entire series are out and selling fast.

DDA has suggested hiring a Freight House Promotions director through an intern program of EMU's Marketing department. DTA pledged $200.00 towards that eventuality. Next meeting is January 9th. They have also suggested changes in the new traffic pattern.

RAG REPORTS a merchant directory to come out in February or March. Fifty-word copy and ad space are available at no cost. Simply turn in copy before next DTA meeting to the Caboose.

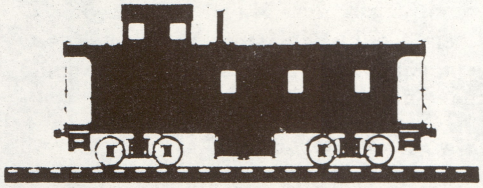
PROMOTIONS: Washtenaw Council for the Arts has $2000.00 available in Priority Grants which may be used by the Heritage Festival to foster the arts in Ypsilanti. WCA is also considering sponsoring the Sunday Frog Island event to dedicate the new park and amphitheatre.

DOWN THE ROAD (Monaghan suggested) why not restore the former Edison plant which sits in the DPW yard on Forest? Why not build our own steam locomotive to operate on local tracks? Why not?

BROCHURE: Fetters and Dodd exhibited the suggested district brochure. Format was approved. Prices will be presented at January meeting for # 60 enamel, two-color, both sides, legal size, letterfold edition.

BY-LAWS were proposed in their fourth version, read and approved. Only change was to drop "board of directors" and replace it with "steering committee."

ANNIVERSARY plans were discussed and arrangements are being made for a block party/dinner in March (next quarterly meeting).
9:19 - adjourned.



## OFFICIAL LEAKS PLUGGED

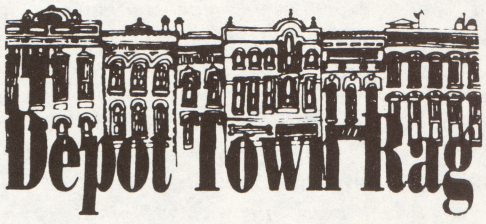
Nobody loves a caboose more than a real railroader, and it's a good thing Depot Town's John Waite returned from California, or our leaking roof might have fallen right in on us. Whenever we meet in the rain, someone usually makes a motion (both physically and parliamentarily) to fix the roof. None of that did much good until Norfolk and Southern's conductor came back to his favorite rail yard. Thanks, John. TheCaboose is dry, warm and ready for the long winter.

## WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT.....ON?

Just about everybody has some historical markers in their lives – something that puts them in touch with the rest of the world and gives them a counting-point from that moment on. Many people can tell you exactly what they were doing when they first heard the news of President John Kennedy's assissination in Dallas. Some folks recall, just as vividly, their family's response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In our neighborhood, folks like to remember that magic moment when Depot Town turned around. Trouble is, everyone gives a different date for that event. Most agree that it nearly coincided with their own arrival – and we think that's as it should be: citizens taking credit for their own involvment and investment in the life of their community.

The passage of DTA's new by-laws provide for quarterly meetings, and a study committee has recommended that the first of those (April) be in recognition of this group's first ten year's activity. Let's make the Association's Tenth Anniversary an event for genuine celebration! Judy Andrews, Carolyn McKeever, Marybelle Suczek and Tom Dodd have volunteered to help put such a program together. So far, they're talking about proclimations by various dignitaries, a State Historical marker, a testimonial dinner, commemorative plaques, a special issue of THE RAG. Give them your ideas and help during the next month.




**A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.**
Gary McKeever, president
**(DTA: The caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48197)**
**Annual dues:**
**Associate member ..... $10**
**Regular member ..... $25**
**Sustaining member ..... $100**

**Hon's**
**Flowers & Fancies**
**46 E. CROSS • 482-2124**
**DEPOT TOWN YPSILANTI**

**Ted's AUTO ELECTRIC**
**307 N. River St. Ypsilanti, Michigan**
**Phone 483-1238**

*Hansen's*
**STANDARD PRINTING**
*"Historic Depot Town"*
**Ypsilanti 483-0339**
*We Print the Depot Town Rag*

## NEW TRAFFIC PLAN TO GET NEWER

Don't worry about not being able to get used to our new complex of one-ways, stops, no-entries and such. After recent conversations of the Foundation, the Association, and the DDA, it looks like it will be scrapped even before it is fully implemented. Seems that most neighbors agree that it is more important to encourage shoppers than to discourage speeders. A stop sign will remain at the intersection where Rice meets Market at the railroad siding and that should help slow down the dragsters. It is not yet known if the New Plan will allow for turning at least one of the now-too-many signs into one which will simply say "parking".

*Dear Rag:*

*What's going on down there in Depot Town? Ever since the bridge opened I see people all over the streets and sidewalks. Your Victorian Holiday was a mess. I even saw a horse drawn carriage adding to the confusion. And it doesn't matter what time of day, what day of the week. I haven't seen such traffic problems since I was a kid. Somebody ought to knock down all those old buildings and put up a shopping center there. At least we could get the cars all parked in straight lines. And then you wouldn't have all those people waving and smiling and standing around talking and getting in everyone's way. Those tour busses make me mad, too. Why don't those people go shopping in their own towns? What do they think this is: Disneyland, or something? I told you all those festivals and concerts would wreck everything. Now look at the mess you're in.*

*Gaylord P. Farquahr*
*former property owner*

## COUNCIL PUTS UP GUARD

With a February election coming up, City Council has approved the expenditure of $19,500.00 for the installation of guards on the openings in the newly finished Cross Street Bridge. Such action may have been in response to the several letters to the editors of the dailies. We urge Council to consider the following safety precautions:

- Streetlight guard-rails to keep walkers from bumping into the new poles to which they are not yet accustomed.
- Pedestrian crossings with "walk/don't walk" flashers.
- No-slip bath tub strips on the sidewalks.
- Ship's grab-bars mounted at waist level on buildings to steady irregular walkers.
- Nightlights in shadowy corners and doorways.
- Padded door knobs.
- Antimacassars on the backs of park benches.
- Signs warning of warning signs in the next block.

This might also be a good time to review the "no spitting" ordinance. This local rule was precipitated by the prevalence of tuberculosis and lung disease in the 19th century when just about everybody chewed or snuffed tobacco. Even ladies cuspidors graced public and commercial buildings. We still have them for sale in the block's antique stores and at the monthly auction. Maybe stricter enforcement would help stem the rise of new epidemics? We think Council should have another study session soon.

*Dear Depot Town*

*Just want to tell you how much I enjoyed the Holiday season in your charming old neighborhood. Depot Town seems to get lovlier each year. I did every bit of Christmas shopping down there and took all my neighbors with me. We loved the old fashioned window displays. You're right the good old days ARE here again. Keep up the good work.*

*Freida (Mrs. Gaylord P.) Farquahr*
*P.S. I think my husband is writing you a letter too.*

## FAST BUCKS

"Adult" bookstores offend middle class neighbors. Prostitutes assault innocent passers-by. Local citizens arrested for soliciting at highway rest areas. Dirty movie theaters dominate downtown street scapes. These people clearly don't know the value of a neighborhood organization.

At the peak of the lumbering days in Michigan, Ypsilanti's Depot Town was a great place for the woodsmen to come and spend their money. They had a hot time in this old town every night!

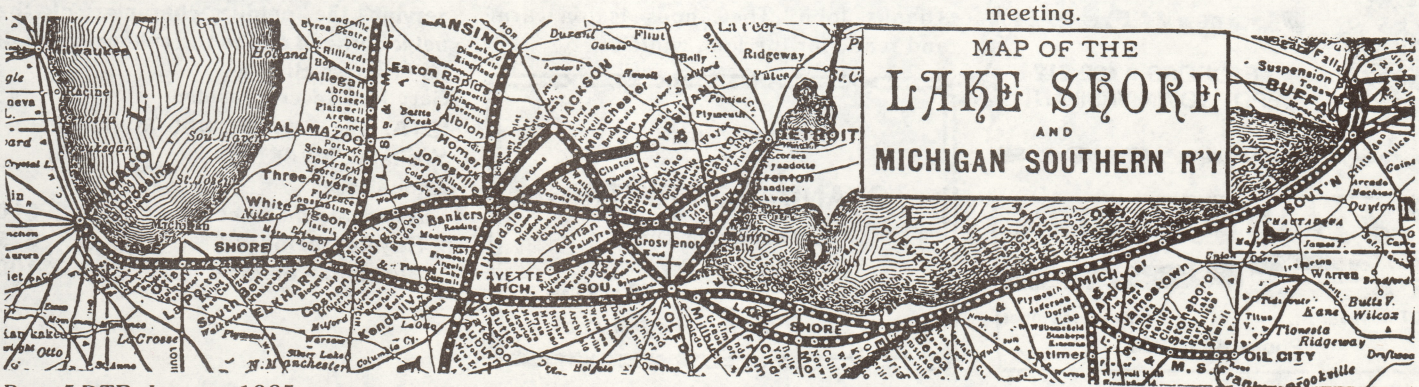
### A Modest Proposal:

Be true to (at least one part of) our heritage and take advantage of all those resourceful businesses who are so unwelcome in their present isolated locales. Bring them all back down here...and then some.

With three different bars, we could appeal to three different sexual preferences. The magazine shop could easily stock racier stuff. Antiquers could start pushing leather and chains. Turn the banks of Frog Island into a nude beach. Show sleazy movies in the parking lot/drive in. Photo parlors, strip joints and dog fights. The Freight House would make a great dance hall, and we could keep that casino equipment well beyond our three-day annual limit. And all those upstairs ballrooms! Taxi dancing is back! Fancy ladies. And men! Take all the hookers off these streets and put them in those upstairs apartments where they belong. Why, we're so well organized, if we'd just change our ethics a bit, we'd be instant millionaires. (Have you ever looked at the odds in the state lottery?)

We'd still need some contrast, so keep the church on North River and encourage the WCTU to organize their torchlight parades there. Put politicians on the caboose platform to initiate their reform campaigns. It's a sure formula for getting rich quick. We'd be so successful, even better-organized crime would buy us out. (Do they pay cash?)

Turn those new orange street lights RED and enjoy an instant reputation as America's most obvious Sin City. Be sure to cast your vote at next month's DTA meeting.



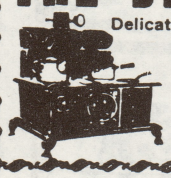
Aubree's

Depot Town
Ypsilanti, Michigan

AUBREE'S SALOON ads in the dailies are now in the form of a photo of their new upstairs jazz room, leading many new clients to "discover" Depot Town from the second floor.

Grand Trunk Ltd.
Formerly Rosemary's
NEEDLE ARTS and HANDCRAFTS
15 E. CROSS
YPSILANTI, MICH. 48197
(313) 485-4994
Corner

GRAND TRUNK, LTD. has finished their extensive remodeling and boasts a fascinating labarinth of showrooms featuring gifts, cards, crafts and many interesting surprises. All this surrounds THE CANDY SHOP, which will take you back to the days of your childhood.

Eat in or carry out
Delicious fresh made to order sandwiches
Soup and Salad Bar
THE DELI SHOPPE

Delicatessen and Catering
In Historic Depot Town
17 East Cross St
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
483-3574
Catering by Bette Beck
Specializing in Wedding Receptions

THE
HEALTH EMPORIUM

"To your good health"
FOR YOUR NUTRITIONAL NEEDS
19 E. CROSS 485-2711
DEPOT TOWN YPSILANTI

THE FOLLETT HOUSE has a new ditch and drain system in the back alley and hopes the run-off problems they have experienced are corrected. New parking curbs help to control their alley access. Their last second floor apartment is finished, marking two floors of full occupancy in a building which was considered hopeless fifteen years ago. We may see that ballroom back in use, after all.

RAGTIME
"Time's the test-
Old Friends are best."
Down in Depot Town

PRONTO PIZZA will soon see the completion of two huge new studio apartments above their space.

CHEF IN THE HOUSE is still a long way from open, but extensive interior remodeling continues in one of the last non-retail first floor properties on the block.

OLD TOWN COIN AND GOLD had their broken window replaced at once, but the beautifully lettered sign that was destroyed is painted once again, but hanging on plexiglass just in case.

CITY BODY SHOP and its adjacent properties are listed for sale. This excellent property includes nearly two acres of undeveloped land and borders the Huron River, facing Riverside Park.

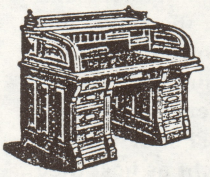
Old Town
RESTAURANT
Home Cooked
Breakfast • Lunch
& Dinner
HISTORIC DEPOT DOWN

OLD TOWN RESTAURANT'S new addition is open and feels like it's been there all along. They didn't get too hoity-toity, either. Most old customers figure they deserve such treatment. New folks must think it's always been that way. The kitchen crew is handling the new menu well, by now, and most of us are back at our same tables in the old part. Let the tourists sit on the carpeting.

a non-profit business serving depot town

YPSI FOOD COOP
312 N. RIVER 483-1520
open: Sun. 12 - 4 Mon. - Fri. 10 - 7 Sat. 9 - 6

The Ypsilanti Food co-op presents "Cooking Encounters" Saturday January 12 from 10 am until 2 pm at the co-op. This month features a display of recipes, samples and information regarding WINTER SOUPS The Ypsilanti Food Co-op is located at 312 N. River in Depot Town, and more information can be obtained by calling 483-1520. The co-op is now open on Sundays from noon until 4 pm.


BANK, COURT HOUSE, OFFICE FURNITURE
Office Desks a Specialty.
Union School Furniture Co.,
BATTLE CREEK, MICH.
Send for Prices and Catalogue.

HANSEN'S STANDARD PRINTING installed bevelled glass window in the new door and their new awning replaces the previous electric sign and continues an old tradition on the block. Their front office looks old – and the new roll-top desk is very much at home. A new back door is being installed, too.

DINING CAR CHINA
LINENS–CRYSTAL–SILVER–PAPER
OVER 200 ITEMS!
FROM THESE RAILROADS

Send 25¢ for complete catalog and price list to:
Private Car Limited
3rd and 'A' Streets
Belleville, Illinois 62220

NEW RUMOR DEPARTMENT: A prominent West-sider has voiced interest in moving a private railroad dining car from Chicago to Depot Town, complete with the original china, linens and silver. Just about everybody he knows thinks it's a great idea. Just about everybody. He's married, of course.